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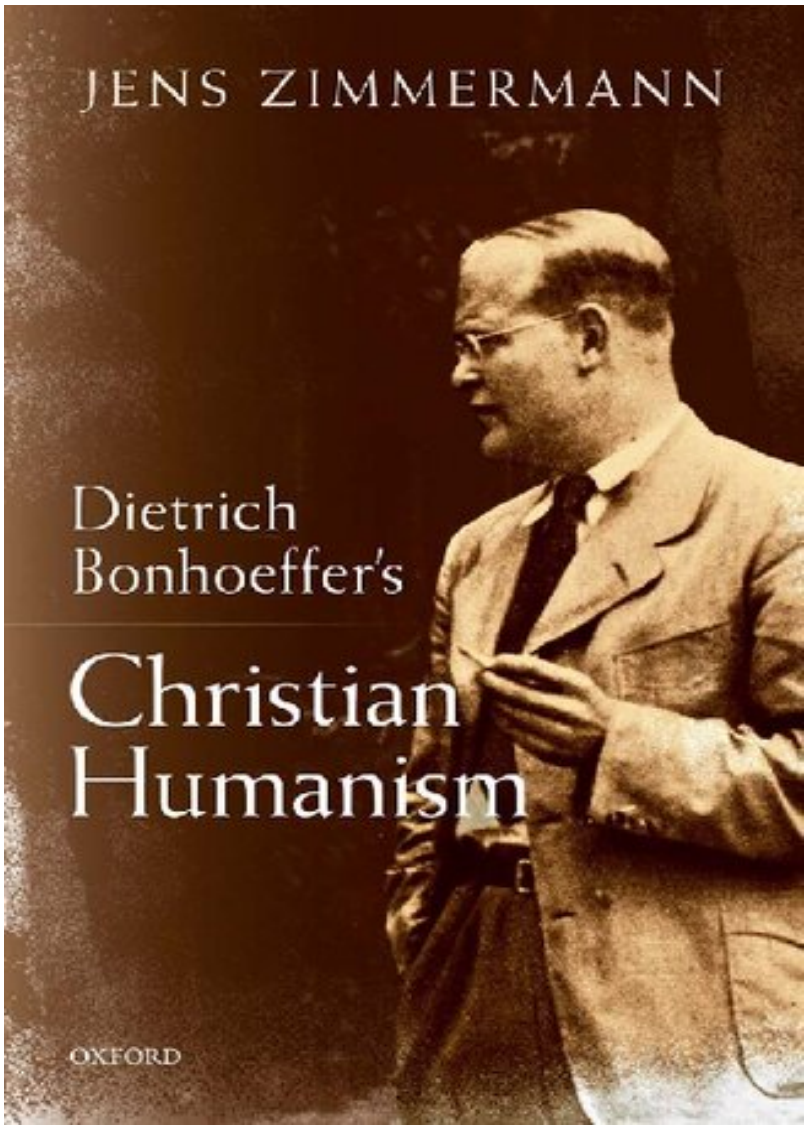


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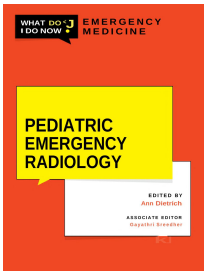


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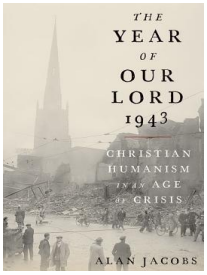


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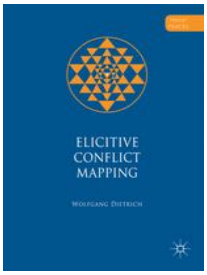

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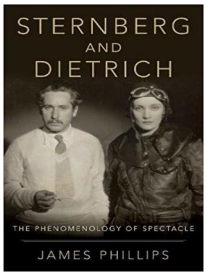


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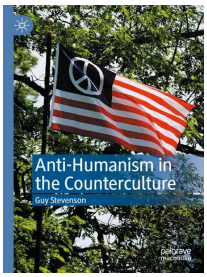


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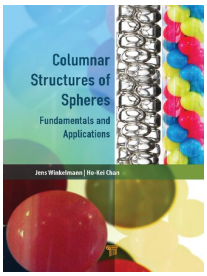


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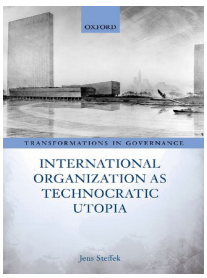


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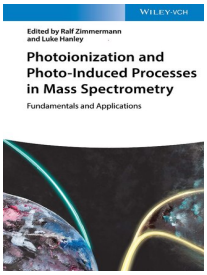

JENS ZIMMERMANN

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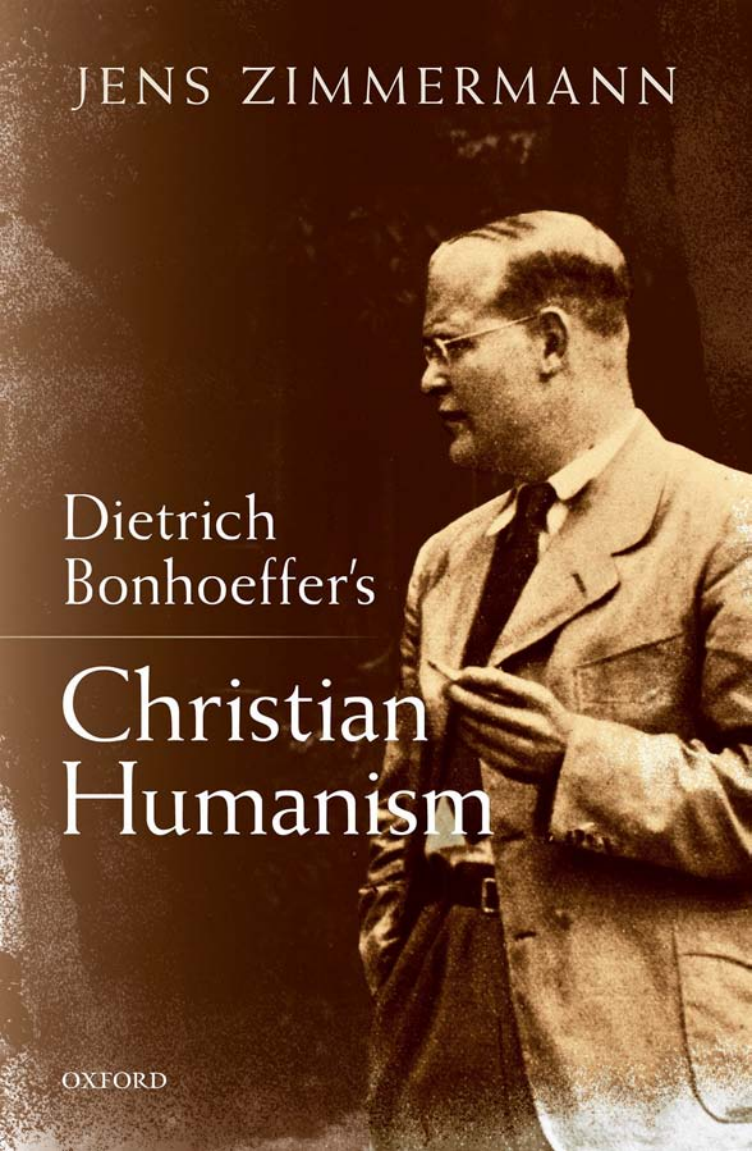

OXFORD

# DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

# Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism

JENS ZIMMERMANN

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*To Sabine, my wife, who exemplifies "being for others."*

# *Foreword*

Jens Zimmermann has acquired a well-deserved reputation as a distinguished scholar for his work on culture, Christian Humanism, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology. Taken together with his *Incarnational Humanism* (2012) and *Religion & Humanism* (2012), this new volume completes a splendid trilogy around these themes. As such, it makes a major contribution to our understanding of the development of Bonhoeffer's theology and its significance for the cultural crisis of our time. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* is, in fact, not just another book about Bonhoeffer, of which there are many already available; it is a systematic and foundational discussion of the development of Bonhoeffer's theology as essentially incarnational, being deeply rooted, as it is, in the Patristic tradition. This rescues Bonhoeffer's legacy from its shallow appropriation by popular liberal and conservative pundits, thereby making it more genuinely radical and relevant.

Zimmermann gives two main reasons for describing Bonhoeffer's theology as a form of Christian humanism. The first is that it "captures the basic thrust of his theology and reveals striking parallels with humanistic themes in the greater Christian tradition." Along with the patristic theologians of the early church, Zimmermann says, "Bonhoeffer interprets the gospel as God's promise of our new, full humanity, a promise that has become a reality in the Incarnation through Christ's recapitulation of creation." The second reason Zimmermann gives, is that this understanding of Bonhoeffer's legacy is urgently needed in the world today, especially in the West with its chronic and "unprecedented uncertainty" about what it means to be human. But there is an equally important reason, which emerges throughout book, namely that when we read Bonhoeffer's theology with the incarnation as its "unifying focus," then all the key categories that traverse its development, from vicarious representation and sociality, to realistic responsibility and Christianity as participation in Christ's new humanity, cohere.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* is thus far more than an exploration of the Patristic roots of Bonhoeffer's theology. It is about the incarnational character of Bonhoeffer's hermeneutics in his endeavor to understand and proclaim the "Word of God here and now in the most concrete way possible." For that reason, the incarnational character of Bonhoeffer's biblical hermeneutics is central to Zimmermann's project. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's growing understanding of the biblical message correlates with his emerging Christian humanism, for his "biblical hermeneutic is subservient to Christformation, that is, to becoming truly human by becoming Christlike." In other words, the Bible

is sacramental and therefore analogous to the Incarnation in "mediating divine presence through human words." As Bonhoeffer's understanding of the Incarnation deepens, so his interpretation of the Bible changes. Not only does he come to a fresh appreciation of the Old Testament, but also to an awareness of the presence of God in the totality of life, which leads him in turn to his nonreligious interpretation of biblical concepts.

Bonhoeffer's incarnational theology is, then, all about the embodiment of God's unchanging Word within our ever-changing historical contexts. Such an approach to Christian praxis, rather than dividing the world into separate realms, the sacred, and secular, unifies and grounds all reality, making the humanity of Christ normative for humanity and Christian action realistic and responsible. The consequence is that Bonhoeffer's theology provides a creative yet critical bridge between Christianity and other humanist projects, whether secular or religious, which share a commitment to a more just and peaceable world, and therefore to the renewal of a more humane culture.

My hunch is that *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* is going to be widely discussed within the circles of Bonhoeffer scholarship; my hope is that its core message will have a much wider impact among Christians who are as concerned as Bonhoeffer was about the future of humanity. But whether my hunch is correct, or my hope realized, this is a book for everyone who is seriously interested in understanding Bonhoeffer's theology and its significance today.

John W. de Gruchy

*Hermanus, South Africa*

# *Preface*

Why a book on Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism? Indeed, why another book on Bonhoeffer at all? The second question is easy to answer. As Jean Bethke Elshtain once observed, scholars working with Bonhoeffer tend to become obsessed with him, and I hoped that writing a book on Bonhoeffer's theology would attenuate my own fascination with this theologian that began about ten years ago. The content of this book, however, is meant to answer the first question: I wrote a book on Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism because no comprehensive theological study of this kind exists, even though prominent Bonhoeffer scholars, such as Clifford Green, Fritz de Lange,[1] and, most extensively, John de Gruchy[2] have already applied the label Christian humanism to Bonhoeffer's theology.

In his introduction to Bonhoeffer's *Ethics,* Green suggests that "Bonhoeffer's Christology, his doctrine of God's becoming human in Jesus Christ, is the foundation of a Christian humanism" because the Incarnation promises "both personally and corporately" the "restoration of true humanity."[3] While Green merely hints at the humanistic quality of Bonhoeffer's theology, de Gruchy and de Lange have shown in greater detail the confluence of biblical and cultural influences on his humanism, which had been nurtured by a classical, European education. De Lange, for example, argues that both Bonhoeffer's upbringing and theology incline him to a "humanism of the other" that he identifies with the most humane ideals of Western culture. For Bonhoeffer, therefore, "only a theology which takes the incarnation of God as starting point will be able to make the tradition of European humanism bear fruit, the inheritance of a particular Europe, yet universal in its intentions—as is Christian faith itself."[4]

John de Gruchy, whose Bonhoeffer scholarship and Christian humanist outlook have largely inspired the present work, has outlined the ethical and political dimensions of Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism. De Gruchy draws particular attention to the ecumenical, inclusive character of Bonhoeffer's

[1] "A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith: The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in its Context," in *Bonhoeffer's Ethics: Old Europe and New Frontiers* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991), 81–96.

[2] De Gruchy is the only Bonhoeffer scholar who outlines Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism in greater detail, in part because he identifies his own considerable and interdisciplinary, wide-ranging theological work as Christian humanism. See De Gruchy, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer as Christian Humanist," in *Being Human, Becoming* Human, ed. Jens Zimmermann and Brian Gregor (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 3–24, and *Confessions of a Christian Humanist* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

[3] "Editor's Introduction," in *Ethics*, *DBWE* 6, 1–44, 6.

[4] De Lange, "A Particular Europe, A Universal Faith," 93.

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thought as "a humanism deeply rooted in the sociality of humanity, the struggle for peace and solidarity with social victims and with other humanists engaged in resisting tyranny, a Christianity that affirms hope against despair, and life against death."[5] My detailed analysis of Bonhoeffer's theology will delineate the christological structures of this ecumenical, life-affirming humanism. In short, this book will be a further development of and critical engagement with existing scholarship to show more comprehensively that Bonhoeffer is intrinsically a Christian humanist.

Most fundamentally, I assume, along with Green, de Gruchy, and de Lange, that Bonhoeffer is a Christian humanist because of his incarnational starting point. The conviction that God became human so that human beings could become truly human by being transformed into the likeness of Christ, the true image of God, is the heartbeat of Bonhoeffer's Christianity that unifies and motivates his theological writing, his preaching, and his political convictions, including his opposition to Hitler. On account of God's becoming human, Christianity as participation in the new humanity established by Christ is all about becoming fully human by becoming Christlike. Bonhoeffer's incarnational starting point leads cumulatively to a decidedly humanistic theology as detailed in the chapters of this book: an anthropology centered on humanity, a theology structured hermeneutically, an ethic focused on Christformation, a biblical hermeneutic centered on God's transforming presence, and a theological politics aimed at human flourishing.

What then do these chapters contribute concretely to extant scholarship on Bonhoeffer? It is well known, after all, that the source of Bonhoeffer's humanist outlook is the incarnation. The *Leitmotif* that informs all themes Bonhoeffer takes up is God's becoming human in Christ to restore human beings to their full humanity. Whether in the ecclesiology at the heart of his doctoral dissertation in which he develops a sociology of the church (*Sanctorum Communio*), in the christological ontology he develops in his habilitation to correlate transcendence and immanence (*Act and Being*), in the quality of the Christian life as obedient discipleship in the service of others (*Discipleship*, *Life Together*), in the theological interpretation of scripture (*Creation and Fall*, *The Prayer book of the Bible*), or in the holistic vision for Christian life in a secular society (*Ethics* and the 'new' prison theology of the prison letters)—all these theological explorations find unity in Bonhoeffer's unwavering commitment to the incarnation. This pervasive incarnational focus makes Bonhoeffer a *Christian humanist*.[6]

[5] "Christian Humanism: Reclaiming a Tradition; Affirming an Identity," in *CTI Reflections* 8 (April 19, 2009), 16.

[6] It may be more accurate theologically to speak about Bonhoeffer's *christological* humanism, but this term is slightly awkward and hinders an immediate association with the more familiar term Christian humanism applied to patristic and medieval theologians whose approach is no less christological and based on the incarnation.

What has not been examined in any detail, however, is exactly *how* Christology both grounds the Christian life as formation in true humanity and also provides the *formative structures* that define human nature, knowing, and living with others in a common secular sphere. Moreover, to my knowledge, few have attempted to locate Bonhoeffer within the greater Christian humanist tradition that extends back to patristic theology. In this book, I wish to close both of these gaps by attempting to show the christological inner workings, as it were, of Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism with constant reference to the greater Christian tradition.

Determining Bonhoeffer's relation to the greater Christian tradition, and especially to patristic writers, reveals his rootedness in a christological heritage Rowan Williams has aptly summarized in *Christ the Heart of Creation*.[7] Williams demonstrates that Bonhoeffer inherits and rearticulates for his time the Chalcedonian patristic legacy of the incarnation paradigmatic for a participatory ontology and a non-competitive model of finite-infinite relations that shape his theological outlook, his ethics, and also his late prison theology. Because for Bonhoeffer Christ "literally embodies" the "non-competitive relation of Creator and creature,"[8] sacred and profane are neither identical nor opposed, and Christian discipleship as participation in Christ's new humanity adopts the comportment of a God who has no need to defend himself, freeing Christians from the obsession of self-justification.[9] Williams helps us see that Bonhoeffer's incarnational starting point (our knowledge about who God is starts with the incarnation), and his this-worldly Christianity (the refusal "to see the integrity of the finite somehow disrupted or diminished by the infinite") stem from his intuitive grasp and creative rearticulation of patristic Christology.[10] Williams's book appeared after my completion of the present work, thus preventing a more sustained engagement; as it turns out, in some ways *Bonhoeffer's Christian Humanism* shows in greater detail the effects of Bonhoeffer's patristic christological heritage Williams has traced so astutely in his work.

For example, Williams also notes the central role *Stellvertretung* (vicarious representation) plays in Bonhoeffer's appropriation of Chalcedonian Christology that establishes at the heart of reality "the solidarity of Creator and creation."[11] We will show the foundational role of *Stellvertretung* for Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism by highlighting parallels with Irenaeus's concept of recapitulation to which he alludes in his prison letters.[12] Bonhoeffer's entire theology hinges on his conviction that in Christ *all of humanity*, indeed all of creation, was summed up and renewed. In both Irenaeus and Bonhoeffer, this recapitulation includes all of creation, and Christians participate in this

[7] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). [8] Ibid., 216. [9] Ibid., 217.
[10] Ibid., 194. [11] Ibid., 203. [12] *DBWE* 8:230.

new reality while still living in the world that awaits Christ's final return.[13] Bonhoeffer's patristic heritage, filtered through Luther, thus includes the grand, universal vison of the *cosmic Christ*, most fully developed in Bonhoeffer's insistence on a single, comprehensive Christ-Reality in *Ethics*. This "christocratic character of reality"[14] follows both Pauline Christianity and the church fathers in emphasizing what Eberhard Bethge called the "ontological coherence" of God's reality with the reality of the world.[15] Faith and reason cooperate because all truth derives from and is sustained by the same eternal Word.

The miracle of Christianity is the uncompromising and non-competitive expression of this eternal Word in the person of Jesus Christ. For Bonhoeffer, following the greater tradition, formation into true humanity occurs by participation in this reality through union with Christ made possible by the incarnation. Isolating the central notion of *Stellvertretung* or vicarious representation allows us to recognize more fully than before the two basic christological structures in Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism responsible for formation into the new humanity or Christ-likeness. The first is the Christ event itself, comprising "manger, cross, and resurrection"[16] into which the Christian is drawn for the sake of Christformation. The second entails the eschatological horizon of reality, or what Bonhoeffer calls the ultimate-penultimate relation.

Concerning the first christological structure, it is God's becoming human in Jesus the Christ, his death on the cross, and his resurrection, with all three elements inseparably held together, that give Bonhoeffer's theology its particular, humanist quality. This triad of manger, cross, and resurrection, by which Christ stood in for humanity and recapitulated the human race to establish the new humanity, determines Bonhoeffer's view of reality. On account of the incarnation, God and world are not in competition and *must* be thought together. Because of the cross, however, this holism is not naïve; for in the cross the fallen world is judged, and death, sin, and dehumanizing practices exposed and condemned. And yet again, the world is judged not with merciless condemnation but with an eye to redemption. The cross is judgment but also reconciliation in light of the resurrection, which shows the world as preserved for its complete renewal into a new creation that already dawns in the church as the new humanity in embryo. Bonhoeffer thus balances the eschatological tension of the 'already and not yet' with a firm commitment to

[13] This theological starting point (*Stellvertretung* or recapitulation) appears already in Bonhoeffer's first academic work *Sanctorum Communio*, is deepened in his Genesis interpretation *Creation and Fall*, and particularly in his subsequent *Christology Lectures* and the cosmic Christology of the *Ethics*.

[14] Larry, L. Rasmussen, *Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 16.

[15] Qtd. in Rasmussen, 16.

[16] The German phrase is *Krippe, Kreuz, und Auferstehung.*

this world and a realistic hope for the future. This, in short, is the structure of 'the one-Christ reality,' in which Christians participate by virtue of their union with Christ.[17]

In insisting on Christformation as being drawn into the entire Christ-event, Bonhoeffer approximates a patristic understanding of the incarnation. As the patristic scholar John Behr has pointed out, for the Johannine gospel and its patristic reception, it is in the entire passion of Christ that the new human being is shaped by God. Accordingly, we cannot speak about God's humanity apart from Christ's life, death, and resurrection, for all three of these taken together reveal to us God's nature and true humanity. Bonhoeffer warns against the "perversion" to "absolutize" any of these elements and thus to invite pathological distortions of human existence.[18] Stressing only the humanity of God encourages an uncritical acceptance of creational orders or dehumanizing cultural practices. Isolating the passion may lead to an undue glorification of suffering, and focusing only on the resurrection easily leads to "radicalism," to a naïve, destructive counter-cultural warfare in the name of religion.[19] In terms of theological grammar, it is therefore misleading to speak of the incarnation, death, and resurrection, because the term "incarnation" already stands for the whole Christ event. It is surely no accident that Bonhoeffer rarely refers to the incarnation and prefers the term *Menschwerdung* to indicate the unique and comprehensive nature of this Christ event. We are becoming human, "a living human being," by being drawn into this event.[20] For Bonhoeffer, as for the early church, "the starting point for theological reflection is the passion,"[21] and being drawn into the Christ-event initiates our Christformation. Bonhoeffer's theology, like Luther's, is therefore truly cruciform, but this term includes and never loses sight of the resurrection. Even when defining Christianity as participating in God's suffering with the world, Bonhoeffer affirms his trust in divine providence and the final return of Christ.[22] According to Bonhoeffer, discipleship indeed means following Christ in this world, but without losing sight of the eschatological aspect of Christ's passion. Faith is participating in all three aspects of Jesus's being, in his "having become human, death, *and* resurrection."[23]

[17] *DBWE* 6:261. Jürgen Moltmann's early essay on Bonhoeffer *Lordship of Christ and Social Reality* (Herrschaft Christi und soziale Wirklichkeit); Heinrich Ott's *Reality and Faith* (Wirklichkeit und Glaube); André Dumas' *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality* (Une théologie de la réalité: Dietrich Bonhoeffer); Rainer Mayer's *Christ Reality* (Christuswirklichkeit); and, more recently, Barry Harvey's *Taking Hold of the Real* each fully recognize this unifying concern in Bonhoeffer's writings.

[18] DBWE 6:157. [19] Ibid.

[20] See *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel: A Prologue to Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 110 and 255.

[21] Ibid., 251. [22] *DBWE* 8:329, 377. [23] *DBWE* 8:501 (my emphasis).

The eschatological tension we just described forms the second, and related, christological structure that determines Bonhoeffer's humanistic outlook. In *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer articulates this tension as the ultimate-penultimate relation, one of his original contributions to modern theology. The ultimate-penultimate schema allows him to embrace fully life in this world, without opposing earthly loves to the love of God, but rather affirming whatever is good in earthly life as the rooted in loving God. Loving God thus becomes the *cantus firmus* around which one is free to develop the polyphony of life's "other voices" without conflict.[24] Moreover, as we will see, by affirming "the natural" as legitimate penultimate sphere, Bonhoeffer becomes the sole Lutheran voice of his time attempting to recover nature as the sphere of God's grace, thereby espousing an integral humanism that approximates similar efforts by fellow Catholic Christian humanists like Jacques Maritain or Henri de Lubac. By discussing Bonhoeffer in the context of Catholic thought on nature and grace, including Maritain's natural law tradition, we also hope to stimulate conversation on this hitherto rather neglected overlap.

While molded within the German, twentieth-century context of liberal Protestantism and its challenge by dialectic theology, Bonhoeffer's thinking transcends any narrow confessional divisions. For all the Lutheran accents of his theology, he is a remarkably ecumenical thinker. He once remarked that God will not ask us on the day of judgment "whether we have been evangelical but whether we did His will."[25] As we will show in this book, Bonhoeffer appropriated from patristic and Roman Catholic sources those insights he deemed most conducive to Christformation (and therefore to humanization) and which aided his critical engagement with nineteenth-century Protestantism. Showing that his theology proceeds from a philanthropic or humanistic interpretation of the gospel opens up the full ecumenical potential of Bonhoeffer's theology and reveals him as a truly *catholic* theologian. The parallels between his Christian humanism and that of the church fathers, which resonates still strongly in contemporary Catholicism, derive from his creative appropriation of the greater Christian tradition.

We will in fact encounter significant parallels between patristic theology and Bonhoeffer's theology, a kinship little explored since its recognition thirty years ago by the church historian Reinhart Staats, who rightly points to Bonhoeffer's affinity for and familiarity with the church fathers, attributable to his training under Adolf von Harnack.[26] Characteristically, Bonhoeffer hardly ever acknowledges individual patristic sources in his creative appropriation of the tradition, wherefore a detailed genealogical approach of

[24] *DBWE* 8:394. [25] *DBW* 4:188; *DBWE* 4:179.
[26] Reinhart Staats, "Das patristische Erbe in der Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers," 179–80.

mapping source influence remains impossible. And yet, our focus on Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism, that is, on his interpretation of the gospel and the Christian life as the attainment of true humanity, reveals the extent of Bonhoeffer's creative adaptation of the greater Christian tradition, beyond the usually explored influences of Martin Luther or Karl Barth.

We will argue, likely controversially, that one such parallel includes patristic logos Christology with its anthropological emphasis on *theosis* or Christification that endured even into the theology of the Protestant reformers, and still shapes Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologies today. A proper understanding of deification, to use the Latin term, reveals significant resemblances with Bonhoeffer's central notion of Christformation. A careful reading of patristic literature on this matter will allow us to move beyond hasty judgments concerning Bonhoeffer's relation to the greater tradition of Christian humanism. For example, Clifford Green claims that Bonhoeffer's reading of the gospel as the "restoration of true humanity" "reverses" the patristic teaching of deification.[27] I will show in the first chapters of this book that this claim is misleading and rests on a typical Protestant misunderstanding of *theosis* as blurring the creature-creator distinction. When we read patristic theology not as departure from but faithful continuation (on the whole) of apostolic theology, we recognize that Christian theology begins with the basic humanist impulse formulated by Athanasius in his work *On the Incarnation*: "For [the Word of God] was incarnate so that we might be made god."[28] As I will illustrate with examples from Irenaeus, the Cappadocians and other patristic sources, for the fathers, *theopoiesis*, being made divine, does not erase the boundaries between God and creature, but refers to the attainment of Christlikeness made possible by the incarnation and enacted through participation in the being of Christ.

This participatory ontology also explains the similar sacramentalism characteristic of both patristic and Bonhoeffer's Christian humanism. In outlining the orientation of his humanism toward God's presence in church and world, I affirm and deepen recent studies on the sacramental nature of Bonhoeffer's thought.[29] As I show in another chapter, recognizing the sacramental nature of his thought also permits us to view Bonhoeffer's biblical hermeneutic as integral to his Christian humanism. Exegesis, along with the sacraments and liturgical life, becomes an essential part of Christformation, the growth into true humanity that defines Bonhoeffer's theology. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's theology becomes increasingly humanistic to the degree to which he works out more fully the implications of what the greater tradition calls the "cosmic

[27] *DBWE* 6:6.

[28] *On the Incarnation* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 54 (167).

[29] See for example, Tobias Schulte, *Ohne Gott mit Gott: Glaubenshermeneutik mit Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2013); and Nadine Hamilton, *Dietrich Bonhoeffers Hermeneutik der Responsivität* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

Christ," i.e., the Pauline claim that all things were created for the sake of Christ and are sustained by him.

Grasping ever more fully the ramifications of Nicean and Chalcedonian theology, of God having become human, Bonhoeffer works out a participatory ontology that allows him to discern sacramentally how God through Christ takes form in believers, in the church, and world. This deepening understanding of participation in Christ illuminates Bonhoeffer's more challenging later work, including the concepts of "religionless Christianity," and "a world come of age." We will see, in fact, that even his political engagement, including the affirmation of Hitler's assassination, flows from this participation in one Christ reality.[30]

Placing Bonhoeffer within the greater tradition, however, also requires attention to his own particular German and Lutheran cultural context. Bonhoeffer, for all his ecumenical spirit, was formed as a twentieth-century Protestant theologian, wrestling with uniquely modern theological problems. Specifically, he offers profound theological critiques, aided by Dilthey's emphasis on historicity and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, of idealist philosophy (including the Cartesian dualism that fuels rationalist conceptions of reality) and its remnants in Barth's theology. What has been particularly neglected in Bonhoeffer scholarship until now is how Bonhoeffer creatively recovers patristic themes with the help of modern thought, that is, his innovative appropriation of participatory ontology in *hermeneutic* terms. Because God has entered time and history, fusing the transcendent and the immanent, the material world mediates all human knowledge about God. Bonhoeffer held that human knowledge thus follows the pattern of the incarnation in the material, historical, and linguistic mediation of transcendent truths. In recognizing the epistemological import of the incarnation, he advances a fundamentally hermeneutic theology that takes account of both human finitude in knowing, and revelation's intrinsically interpretive quality. In delineating the hitherto neglected hermeneutical structure of Bonhoeffer's theology, our analysis of his Christian humanism further demonstrates the contemporary relevance of his thought.

We conclude with a few words on the comprehensive nature of this book. The best Bonhoeffer interpreters have insisted that "conducting an adequate interpretation of Bonhoeffer's theology is possible only within the framework of interpreting his work as a whole."[31] This book follows this admonition by keeping the entire corpus of Bonhoeffer's work in view. Bonhoeffer scholars have tried to capture the overall thrust of his theology

[30] Larry Rasmussen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance*, 124–6.

[31] Rainer Mayer, *Christuswirklichkeit. Grundlagen, Entwicklung Und Konsequenzen Der Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers.* Arbeiten Zur Theologie, Reihe 2. (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1969), 16.

by calling it a "theology of sociality,"[32] "a theology of reality,"[33] and "a theology of life."[34] While these labels do capture key aspects of Bonhoeffer's theology, the underlying assumption of this book is that Christian humanism more fully captures the overall quality and impetus of Bonhoeffer's achievement.

Without wanting to mount an argument for the unity of Bonhoeffer's writings, a unifying, retrospective interpretive lens turns out to be one significant byproduct of describing his theology as humanism. Reading Bonhoeffer's theology as a Christian humanism, unified by an incarnational focus, allows us to read backwards from his more mature theology in *Ethics* to his theological beginnings. Basic Bonhoefferian categories, such as vicarious representation, sociality, realistic responsibility, and Christianity as participation in Christ's new humanity are established early on and continue throughout his work, from his first dissertation to his prison letters. When read holistically as incarnational humanism, his major writings seem to order themselves into four phases. In the first phase, Bonhoeffer's dissertation, habilitation, and his inaugural lecture on the human question[35] form a natural unity in which theological anthropology, over against philosophical idealism, constitutes a dominating interest. Following the personalist tendencies of his day—represented by thinkers such as Martin Buber, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Gogarten, and others—Bonhoeffer articulates a concretely historical, ethical, responsible Christian self, whose equiprimordial individuality and sociality persist into *Ethics* and the prison theology. Authentic selfhood and self-knowledge become possible only within the church whose nature is "Christ existing as community," an incarnational conception of the *sanctorum communio* that continues to remain essential for all of Bonhoeffer's theology.

Bonhoeffer's winter term 1932/33 course (eventually published as *Creation and Fall*) and the subsequent Christology lectures in the summer term 1933 mark a distinct shift in his outlook. Bonhoeffer himself cites a personal turn "from the phraseological to the real," indicating a move from a theoretical mode of theologizing to one of existential seriousness. Eberhard Bethge interprets this time of Bonhoeffer's life as "the turn from theologian to the Christian," a slightly misleading way of putting the same idea.[36] Bonhoeffer did not, of course, forgo theology, nor did the theological conceptions he developed disappear from his writings. He did, however, become both more

[32] Clifford J. Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999).

[33] Heinrich Ott, *Reality and Faith: The Theological Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. 1st American ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

[34] Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *A Theology of Life: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998).

[35] *DBWE* 10:389.

[36] Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*: *A Biography*, trans. Eric Mosbacher (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 202 ff.

ecclesial and serious in the practice of Christianity: he adopted a meditative reading of the scriptures, talked about the existential reality of confession, and leaned towards pacifism. Undoubtedly, Bonhoeffer's sojourn at Union Theological Seminary and his contact with African-American spirituality contributed significantly to this change.[37] In the early 1930s, Christ and Christianity became a deeply existential reality for Bonhoeffer, as indicated by his own confession that around this time "I came for the first time to the Bible. . . . I had already often preached, I had seen much of the church, talked and written about it—and I had not yet become a Christian."[38]

Bonhoeffer's theology during these years displays a new intensity and rhetorical quality that defies easy characterization. Even in his earlier academic pieces, Bonhoeffer adopts an assertive voice that does not hide behind academic references to other thinkers. Yet at this time, Bonhoeffer's tone becomes more declaratory, as if indeed each of his new works from this point onward attempts to answer the question that determines Bonhoeffer's entire theology, namely "who is Christ for us today?" The self-reflexive, confessional style of his lectures on Genesis indicates this new urgency, demonstrating his passion for the church and for the human need to be addressed by God in Christ. This ecclesial, existential Christian theologizing conditions the remainder of Bonhoeffer's theology.

The third phase occurs following *Discipleship*. His *Ethics* continues to outline obedient living in Christ as part of Christ's body, or as "Christ existing in community." Here his theology enters an even more self-reflective and hermeneutical mode. The influence of Catholic theology and the anticipation of articulating Christianity for a post-war era give *Ethics* a different outlook from *Discipleship*, even while addressing the same question, "who is Christ for us today?" Bonhoeffer's unique attempt in *Ethics* to recover for Protestantism a sense of the "natural" confirms his growing sense that God's presence is also experienced within creation, providing natural human rights, and a natural platform for public ethical reasoning.

Finally, the prison theology, with the provocative ideas of religionless Christianity, non-religious interpretation of biblical concepts, and unconscious Christianity explores further the implications of the incarnation for a world becoming disenchanted with its particular Western Christian inheritance. In this fourth phase, the question becomes how God is Lord over, and at the same time present in, *this* "mature" world, and how Christians participate in Christ's reconciliation of it to God. Disenchanted with the Lutheran church and its failure to resist the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer envisions a disestablished

[37] See Reggie Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2014).

[38] Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologe-Christ-Zeitgenosse. Eine Biographie.* Rev. ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004), 249.

church that has to earn its credibility by prayer and righteous living. Yet, as in all the other phases of his theological development, Bonhoeffer contemplates with these developments the implications of following a God who became human in vicarious representative action.

In sum, from beginning to end, albeit in ever more nuanced and fuller dimensions, Bonhoeffer's theology represents a Christian (christological) humanism. That, at least, is the argument advanced in this book, backed up by readings of Bonhoeffer's texts, sermons, and letters from his early academic works to his last letters from prison. What then does one gain from reading Bonhoeffer as a Christian humanist? For one, the reader will gain a comprehensive sense of what Bonhoeffer's theology is about (becoming truly human through participation in Christ). Moreover, reading Bonhoeffer as Christian humanist allows us to view Bonhoeffer's whole theology in light of the greater Christian tradition, from the church fathers onwards, thus throwing into relief the catholic, ecumenical appeal of his theology. I am certain from many conversations with Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic friends that this reading of Bonhoeffer's anthropology and participatory ontology will resonate with their traditions. Finally, reading Bonhoeffer as Christian humanist may also provide yet another aid for overcoming residual dualistic misrepresentations of God's relation to the world. Bonhoeffer's humanist interpretation of the gospel as God's *philanthropy* recalls the early church's social engagement and concern for human flourishing based on God's becoming human. This recovery, in turn, is important for our assessment of Christianity's role within modern, pluralistic societies.

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# Exploring the Variety of Random Documents with Different Content

behind the hill and the clouds that had been guarding it lay in dark patches near the stars. The carriage with red lamps rattled along the road and soon overtook the doctor. It was Abogin driving off to protest, to do absurd things. . . .

All the way home the doctor thought not of his wife, nor of his Andrey, but of Abogin and the people in the house he had just left. His thoughts were unjust and inhumanly cruel. He condemned Abogin and his wife and Paptchinsky and all who lived in rosy, subdued light among sweet perfumes, and all the way home he hated and despised them till his head ached. And a firm conviction concerning those people took shape in his mind.

Time will pass and Kirilov's sorrow will pass, but that conviction, unjust and unworthy of the human heart, will not pass, but will remain in the doctor's mind to the grave.

# THE EXAMINING MAGISTRATE

A DISTRICT doctor and an examining magistrate were driving one fine spring day to an inquest. The examining magistrate, a man of five and thirty, looked dreamily at the horses and said:

"There is a great deal that is enigmatic and obscure in nature; and even in everyday life, doctor, one must often come upon phenomena which are absolutely incapable of explanation. I know, for instance, of several strange, mysterious deaths, the cause of which only spiritualists and mystics will undertake to explain; a clear-headed man can only lift up his hands in perplexity. For example, I know of a highly cultured lady who foretold her own death and died without any apparent reason on the very day she had predicted. She said that she would die on a certain day, and she did die."

"There's no effect without a cause," said the doctor. "If there's a death there must be a cause for it. But as for predicting it there's nothing very marvellous in that. All our ladies—all our females, in fact—have a turn for prophecies and presentiments."

"Just so, but my lady, doctor, was quite a special case. There was nothing like the ladies' or other females' presentiments about her prediction and her death. She was a young woman, healthy and clever, with no superstitions of any sort. She had such clear, intelligent, honest eyes; an open, sensible face with a faint, typically Russian look of mockery in her eyes and on her lips. There was nothing of the fine lady or of the female about her, except—if you like— her beauty! She was graceful, elegant as that birch tree; she had wonderful hair. That she may be intelligible to you, I will add, too, that she was a person of the most infectious gaiety and carelessness and that intelligent, good sort of frivolity which is only

found in good-natured, light-hearted people with brains. Can one talk of mysticism, spiritualism, a turn for presentiment, or anything of that sort, in this case? She used to laugh at all that."

The doctor's chaise stopped by a well. The examining magistrate and the doctor drank some water, stretched, and waited for the coachman to finish watering the horses.

"Well, what did the lady die of?" asked the doctor when the chaise was rolling along the road again.

"She died in a strange way. One fine day her husband went in to her and said that it wouldn't be amiss to sell their old coach before the spring and to buy something rather newer and lighter instead, and that it might be as well to change the left trace horse and to put Bobtchinsky (that was the name of one of her husband's horses) in the shafts.

"His wife listened to him and said:

"'Do as you think best, but it makes no difference to me now. Before the summer I shall be in the cemetery.'

"Her husband, of course, shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"'I am not joking,' she said. 'I tell you in earnest that I shall soon be dead.'

"'What do you mean by soon?'

"'Directly after my confinement. I shall bear my child and die.'

"The husband attached no significance to these words. He did not believe in presentiments of any sort, and he knew that ladies in an interesting condition are apt to be fanciful and to give way to gloomy ideas generally. A day later his wife spoke to him again of dying immediately after her confinement, and then every day she spoke of it and he laughed and called her a silly woman, a fortune-teller, a crazy creature. Her approaching death became an *idée fixé* with his

wife. When her husband would not listen to her she would go into the kitchen and talk of her death to the nurse and the cook.

"'I haven't long to live now, nurse,' she would say. 'As soon as my confinement is over I shall die. I did not want to die so early, but it seems it's my fate.'

"The nurse and the cook were in tears, of course. Sometimes the priest's wife or some lady from a neighbouring estate would come and see her and she would take them aside and open her soul to them, always harping on the same subject, her approaching death. She spoke gravely with an unpleasant smile, even with an angry face which would not allow any contradiction. She had been smart and fashionable in her dress, but now in view of her approaching death she became slovenly; she did not read, she did not laugh, she did not dream aloud. What was more she drove with her aunt to the cemetery and selected a spot for her tomb. Five days before her confinement she made her will. And all this, bear in mind, was done in the best of health, without the faintest hint of illness or danger. A confinement is a difficult affair and sometimes fatal, but in the case of which I am telling you every indication was favourable, and there was absolutely nothing to be afraid of. Her husband was sick of the whole business at last. He lost his temper one day at dinner and asked her:

"'Listen, Natasha, when is there going to be an end of this silliness?'

"'It's not silliness, I am in earnest.'

"'Nonsense, I advise you to give over being silly that you may not feel ashamed of it afterwards.'

"Well, the confinement came. The husband got the very best midwife from the town. It was his wife's first confinement, but it could not have gone better. When it was all over she asked to look at her baby. She looked at it and said:

"'Well, now I can die.'

"She said good-bye, shut her eyes, and half an hour later gave up her soul to God. She was fully conscious up to the last moment. Anyway when they gave her milk instead of water she whispered softly:

"'Why are you giving me milk instead of water?'

"So that is what happened. She died as she predicted."

The examining magistrate paused, gave a sigh and said:

"Come, explain why she died. I assure you on my honour, this is not invented, it's a fact."

The doctor looked at the sky meditatively.

"You ought to have had an inquest on her," he said.

"Why?"

"Why, to find out the cause of her death. She didn't die because she had predicted it. She poisoned herself most probably."

The examining magistrate turned quickly, facing the doctor, and screwing up his eyes, asked:

"And from what do you conclude that she poisoned herself?"

"I don't conclude it, but I assume it. Was she on good terms with her husband?"

"H'm, not altogether. There had been misunderstandings soon after their marriage. There were unfortunate circumstances. She had found her husband on one occasion with a lady. She soon forgave him however."

"And which came first, her husband's infidelity or her idea of dying?"

The examining magistrate looked attentively at the doctor as though he were trying to imagine why he put that question.

"Excuse me," he said, not quite immediately. "Let me try and remember." The examining magistrate took off his hat and rubbed his forehead. "Yes, yes . . . it was very shortly after that incident that she began talking of death. Yes, yes."

"Well, there, do you see? . . . In all probability it was at that time that she made up her mind to poison herself, but, as most likely she did not want to kill her child also, she put it off till after her confinement."

"Not likely, not likely! . . . it's impossible. She forgave him at the time."

"That she forgave it quickly means that she had something bad in her mind. Young wives do not forgive quickly."

The examining magistrate gave a forced smile, and, to conceal his too noticeable agitation, began lighting a cigarette.

"Not likely, not likely," he went on. "No notion of anything of the sort being possible ever entered into my head. . . . And besides . . . he was not so much to blame as it seems. . . . He was unfaithful to her in rather a queer way, with no desire to be; he came home at night somewhat elevated, wanted to make love to somebody, his wife was in an interesting condition . . . then he came across a lady who had come to stay for three days—damnation take her— an empty-headed creature, silly and not good-looking. It couldn't be reckoned as an infidelity. His wife looked at it in that way herself and soon . . . forgave it. Nothing more was said about it. . . ."

"People don't die without a reason," said the doctor.

"That is so, of course, but all the same . . . I cannot admit that she poisoned herself. But it is strange that the idea has never struck me before! And no one thought of it! Everyone was astonished that her prediction had come to pass, and the idea . . . of such a death

was far from their mind. And indeed, it cannot be that she poisoned herself! No!”

The examining magistrate pondered. The thought of the woman who had died so strangely haunted him all through the inquest. As he noted down what the doctor dictated to him he moved his eyebrows gloomily and rubbed his forehead.

“And are there really poisons that kill one in a quarter of an hour, gradually, without any pain?” he asked the doctor while the latter was opening the skull.

“Yes, there are. Morphia for instance.”

“H’m, strange. I remember she used to keep something of the sort . . . . But it could hardly be.”

On the way back the examining magistrate looked exhausted, he kept nervously biting his moustache, and was unwilling to talk.

“Let us go a little way on foot,” he said to the doctor. “I am tired of sitting.”

After walking about a hundred paces, the examining magistrate seemed to the doctor to be overcome with fatigue, as though he had been climbing up a high mountain. He stopped and, looking at the doctor with a strange look in his eyes, as though he were drunk, said:

“My God, if your theory is correct, why it’s. . . it was cruel, inhuman! She poisoned herself to punish some one else! Why, was the sin so great? Oh, my God! And why did you make me a present of this damnable idea, doctor!”

The examining magistrate clutched at his head in despair, and went on:

“What I have told you was about my own wife, about myself. Oh, my God! I was to blame, I wounded her, but can it have been easier

to die than to forgive? That's typical feminine logic—cruel, merciless logic. Oh, even then when she was living she was cruel! I recall it all now! It's all clear to me now!"

As the examining magistrate talked he shrugged his shoulders, then clutched at his head. He got back into the carriage, then walked again. The new idea the doctor had imparted to him seemed to have overwhelmed him, to have poisoned him; he was distracted, shattered in body and soul, and when he got back to the town he said good-bye to the doctor, declining to stay to dinner though he had promised the doctor the evening before to dine with him.

# BETROTHED

## I

IT was ten o'clock in the evening and the full moon was shining over the garden. In the Shumins' house an evening service celebrated at the request of the grandmother, Marfa Mihalovna, was just over, and now Nadya—she had gone into the garden for a minute—could see the table being laid for supper in the dining-room, and her grandmother bustling about in her gorgeous silk dress; Father Andrey, a chief priest of the cathedral, was talking to Nadya's mother, Nina Ivanovna, and now in the evening light through the window her mother for some reason looked very young; Andrey Andreitch, Father Andrey's son, was standing by listening attentively.

It was still and cool in the garden, and dark peaceful shadows lay on the ground. There was a sound of frogs croaking, far, far away beyond the town. There was a feeling of May, sweet May! One drew deep breaths and longed to fancy that not here but far away under the sky, above the trees, far away in the open country, in the fields and the woods, the life of spring was unfolding now, mysterious, lovely, rich and holy beyond the understanding of weak, sinful man. And for some reason one wanted to cry.

She, Nadya, was already twenty-three. Ever since she was sixteen she had been passionately dreaming of marriage and at last she was engaged to Andrey Andreitch, the young man who was standing on the other side of the window; she liked him, the wedding was already fixed for July 7, and yet there was no joy in her heart, she was sleeping badly, her spirits drooped. . . . She could hear from the open windows of the basement where the kitchen was the hurrying servants, the clatter of knives, the banging of the swing door; there was a smell of roast turkey and pickled cherries, and for some

reason it seemed to her that it would be like that all her life, with no change, no end to it.

Some one came out of the house and stood on the steps; it was Alexandr Timofeitch, or, as he was always called, Sasha, who had come from Moscow ten days before and was staying with them. Years ago a distant relation of the grandmother, a gentleman's widow called Marya Petrovna, a thin, sickly little woman who had sunk into poverty, used to come to the house to ask for assistance. She had a son Sasha. It used for some reason to be said that he had talent as an artist, and when his mother died Nadya's grandmother had, for the salvation of her soul, sent him to the Komissarovsky school in Moscow; two years later he went into the school of painting, spent nearly fifteen years there, and only just managed to scrape through the leaving examination in the section of architecture. He did not set up as an architect, however, but took a job at a lithographer's. He used to come almost every year, usually very ill, to stay with Nadya's grandmother to rest and recover.

He was wearing now a frock-coat buttoned up, and shabby canvas trousers, crumpled into creases at the bottom. And his shirt had not been ironed and he had somehow all over a look of not being fresh. He was very thin, with big eyes, long thin fingers and a swarthy bearded face, and all the same he was handsome. With the Shumins he was like one of the family, and in their house felt he was at home. And the room in which he lived when he was there had for years been called Sasha's room. Standing on the steps he saw Nadya, and went up to her.

"It's nice here," he said.

"Of course it's nice, you ought to stay here till the autumn."

"Yes, I expect it will come to that. I dare say I shall stay with you till September."

He laughed for no reason, and sat down beside her.

"I'm sitting gazing at mother," said Nadya. "She looks so young from here! My mother has her weaknesses, of course," she added, after a pause, "but still she is an exceptional woman."

"Yes, she is very nice . . ." Sasha agreed. "Your mother, in her own way of course, is a very good and sweet woman, but . . . how shall I say? I went early this morning into your kitchen and there I found four servants sleeping on the floor, no bedsteads, and rags for bedding, stench, bugs, beetles . . . it is just as it was twenty years ago, no change at all. Well, Granny, God bless her, what else can you expect of Granny? But your mother speaks French, you know, and acts in private theatricals. One would think she might understand."

As Sasha talked, he used to stretch out two long wasted fingers before the listener's face.

"It all seems somehow strange to me here, now I am out of the habit of it," he went on. "There is no making it out. Nobody ever does anything. Your mother spends the whole day walking about like a duchess, Granny does nothing either, nor you either. And your Andrey Andreitch never does anything either."

Nadya had heard this the year before and, she fancied, the year before that too, and she knew that Sasha could not make any other criticism, and in old days this had amused her, but now for some reason she felt annoyed.

"That's all stale, and I have been sick of it for ages," she said and got up. "You should think of something a little newer."

He laughed and got up too, and they went together toward the house. She, tall, handsome, and well-made, beside him looked very healthy and smartly dressed; she was conscious of this and felt sorry for him and for some reason awkward.

"And you say a great deal you should not," she said. "You've just been talking about my Andrey, but you see you don't know him."

“My Andrey. . . . Bother him, your Andrey. I am sorry for your youth.”

They were already sitting down to supper as the young people went into the dining-room. The grandmother, or Granny as she was called in the household, a very stout, plain old lady with bushy eyebrows and a little moustache, was talking loudly, and from her voice and manner of speaking it could be seen that she was the person of most importance in the house. She owned rows of shops in the market, and the old-fashioned house with columns and the garden, yet she prayed every morning that God might save her from ruin and shed tears as she did so. Her daughter-in-law, Nadya’s mother, Nina Ivanovna, a fair-haired woman tightly laced in, with a pince-nez, and diamonds on every finger, Father Andrey, a lean, toothless old man whose face always looked as though he were just going to say something amusing, and his son, Andrey Andreitch, a stout and handsome young man with curly hair looking like an artist or an actor, were all talking of hypnotism.

“You will get well in a week here,” said Granny, addressing Sasha. “Only you must eat more. What do you look like!” she sighed. “You are really dreadful! You are a regular prodigal son, that is what you are.”

“After wasting his father’s substance in riotous living,” said Father Andrey slowly, with laughing eyes. “He fed with senseless beasts.”

“I like my dad,” said Andrey Andreitch, touching his father on the shoulder. “He is a splendid old fellow, a dear old fellow.”

Everyone was silent for a space. Sasha suddenly burst out laughing and put his dinner napkin to his mouth.

“So you believe in hypnotism?” said Father Andrey to Nina Ivanovna.

“I cannot, of course, assert that I believe,” answered Nina Ivanovna, assuming a very serious, even severe, expression; “but I

must own that there is much that is mysterious and incomprehensible in nature."

"I quite agree with you, though I must add that religion distinctly curtails for us the domain of the mysterious."

A big and very fat turkey was served. Father Andrey and Nina Ivanovna went on with their conversation. Nina Ivanovna's diamonds glittered on her fingers, then tears began to glitter in her eyes, she grew excited.

"Though I cannot venture to argue with you," she said, "you must admit there are so many insoluble riddles in life!"

"Not one, I assure you."

After supper Andrey Andreitch played the fiddle and Nina Ivanovna accompanied him on the piano. Ten years before he had taken his degree at the university in the Faculty of Arts, but had never held any post, had no definite work, and only from time to time took part in concerts for charitable objects; and in the town he was regarded as a musician.

Andrey Andreitch played; they all listened in silence. The samovar was boiling quietly on the table and no one but Sasha was drinking tea. Then when it struck twelve a violin string suddenly broke; everyone laughed, bustled about, and began saying good-bye.

After seeing her fiancé out, Nadya went upstairs where she and her mother had their rooms (the lower storey was occupied by the grandmother). They began putting the lights out below in the dining-room, while Sasha still sat on drinking tea. He always spent a long time over tea in the Moscow style, drinking as much as seven glasses at a time. For a long time after Nadya had undressed and gone to bed she could hear the servants clearing away downstairs and Granny talking angrily. At last everything was hushed, and nothing could be heard but Sasha from time to time coughing on a bass note in his room below.

# II

When Nadya woke up it must have been two o'clock, it was beginning to get light. A watchman was tapping somewhere far away. She was not sleepy, and her bed felt very soft and uncomfortable. Nadya sat up in her bed and fell to thinking as she had done every night in May. Her thoughts were the same as they had been the night before, useless, persistent thoughts, always alike, of how Andrey Andreitch had begun courting her and had made her an offer, how she had accepted him and then little by little had come to appreciate the kindly, intelligent man. But for some reason now when there was hardly a month left before the wedding, she began to feel dread and uneasiness as though something vague and oppressive were before her.

"Tick-tock, tick-tock . . ." the watchman tapped lazily. ". . . Tick-tock."

Through the big old-fashioned window she could see the garden and at a little distance bushes of lilac in full flower, drowsy and lifeless from the cold; and the thick white mist was floating softly up to the lilac, trying to cover it. Drowsy rooks were cawing in the far-away trees.

"My God, why is my heart so heavy?"

Perhaps every girl felt the same before her wedding. There was no knowing! Or was it Sasha's influence? But for several years past Sasha had been repeating the same thing, like a copybook, and when he talked he seemed naïve and queer. But why was it she could not get Sasha out of her head? Why was it?

The watchman left off tapping for a long while. The birds were twittering under the windows and the mist had disappeared from the garden. Everything was lighted up by the spring sunshine as by a smile. Soon the whole garden, warm and caressed by the sun, returned to life, and dewdrops like diamonds glittered on the leaves

and the old neglected garden on that morning looked young and gaily decked.

Granny was already awake. Sasha's husky cough began. Nadya could hear them below, setting the samovar and moving the chairs. The hours passed slowly, Nadya had been up and walking about the garden for a long while and still the morning dragged on.

At last Nina Ivanovna appeared with a tear-stained face, carrying a glass of mineral water. She was interested in spiritualism and homeopathy, read a great deal, was fond of talking of the doubts to which she was subject, and to Nadya it seemed as though there were a deep mysterious significance in all that.

Now Nadya kissed her mother and walked beside her.

"What have you been crying about, mother?" she asked.

"Last night I was reading a story in which there is an old man and his daughter. The old man is in some office and his chief falls in love with his daughter. I have not finished it, but there was a passage which made it hard to keep from tears," said Nina Ivanovna and she sipped at her glass. "I thought of it this morning and shed tears again."

"I have been so depressed all these days," said Nadya after a pause. "Why is it I don't sleep at night!"

"I don't know, dear. When I can't sleep I shut my eyes very tightly, like this, and picture to myself Anna Karenin moving about and talking, or something historical from the ancient world. . . ."

Nadya felt that her mother did not understand her and was incapable of understanding. She felt this for the first time in her life, and it positively frightened her and made her want to hide herself; and she went away to her own room.

At two o'clock they sat down to dinner. It was Wednesday, a fast day, and so vegetable soup and bream with boiled grain were set

before Granny.

To tease Granny Sasha ate his meat soup as well as the vegetable soup. He was making jokes all through dinner-time, but his jests were laboured and invariably with a moral bearing, and the effect was not at all amusing when before making some witty remark he raised his very long, thin, deathly-looking fingers; and when one remembered that he was very ill and would probably not be much longer in this world, one felt sorry for him and ready to weep.

After dinner Granny went off to her own room to lie down. Nina Ivanovna played on the piano for a little, and then she too went away.

"Oh, dear Nadya!" Sasha began his usual afternoon conversation, "if only you would listen to me! If only you would!"

She was sitting far back in an old-fashioned armchair, with her eyes shut, while he paced slowly about the room from corner to corner.

"If only you would go to the university," he said. "Only enlightened and holy people are interesting, it's only they who are wanted. The more of such people there are, the sooner the Kingdom of God will come on earth. Of your town then not one stone will be left, everything will be blown up from the foundations, everything will be changed as though by magic. And then there will be immense, magnificent houses here, wonderful gardens, marvellous fountains, remarkable people. . . . But that's not what matters most. What matters most is that the crowd, in our sense of the word, in the sense in which it exists now—that evil will not exist then, because every man will believe and every man will know what he is living for and no one will seek moral support in the crowd. Dear Nadya, darling girl, go away! Show them all that you are sick of this stagnant, grey, sinful life. Prove it to yourself at least!"

"I can't, Sasha, I'm going to be married."

"Oh nonsense! What's it for!"

They went out into the garden and walked up and down a little.

"And however that may be, my dear girl, you must think, you must realize how unclean, how immoral this idle life of yours is," Sasha went on. "Do understand that if, for instance, you and your mother and your grandmother do nothing, it means that someone else is working for you, you are eating up someone else's life, and is that clean, isn't it filthy?"

Nadya wanted to say "Yes, that is true"; she wanted to say that she understood, but tears came into her eyes, her spirits drooped, and shrinking into herself she went off to her room.

Towards evening Andrey Andreitch arrived and as usual played the fiddle for a long time. He was not given to much talk as a rule, and was fond of the fiddle, perhaps because one could be silent while playing. At eleven o'clock when he was about to go home and had put on his greatcoat, he embraced Nadya and began greedily kissing her face, her shoulders, and her hands.

"My dear, my sweet, my charmer," he muttered. "Oh how happy I am! I am beside myself with rapture!"

And it seemed to her as though she had heard that long, long ago, or had read it somewhere . . . in some old tattered novel thrown away long ago. In the dining-room Sasha was sitting at the table drinking tea with the saucer poised on his five long fingers; Granny was laying out patience; Nina Ivanovna was reading. The flame crackled in the ikon lamp and everything, it seemed, was quiet and going well. Nadya said good-night, went upstairs to her room, got into bed and fell asleep at once. But just as on the night before, almost before it was light, she woke up. She was not sleepy, there was an uneasy, oppressive feeling in her heart. She sat up with her head on her knees and thought of her fiancé and her marriage. . . . She for some reason remembered that her mother had not loved her father and now had nothing and lived in complete dependence on

her mother-in-law, Granny. And however much Nadya pondered she could not imagine why she had hitherto seen in her mother something special and exceptional, how it was she had not noticed that she was a simple, ordinary, unhappy woman.

And Sasha downstairs was not asleep, she could hear him coughing. He is a queer, naïve man, thought Nadya, and in all his dreams, in all those marvellous gardens and wonderful fountains one felt there was something absurd. But for some reason in his naïveté, in this very absurdity there was something so beautiful that as soon as she thought of the possibility of going to the university, it sent a cold thrill through her heart and her bosom and flooded them with joy and rapture.

"But better not think, better not think . . ." she whispered. "I must not think of it."

"Tick-tock," tapped the watchman somewhere far away. "Tick-tock . . . tick-tock. . . ."

## III

In the middle of June Sasha suddenly felt bored and made up his mind to return to Moscow.

"I can't exist in this town," he said gloomily. "No water supply, no drains! It disgusts me to eat at dinner; the filth in the kitchen is incredible. . . ."

"Wait a little, prodigal son!" Granny tried to persuade him, speaking for some reason in a whisper, "the wedding is to be on the seventh."

"I don't want to."

"You meant to stay with us until September!"

"But now, you see, I don't want to. I must get to work."

The summer was grey and cold, the trees were wet, everything in the garden looked dejected and uninviting, it certainly did make one long to get to work. The sound of unfamiliar women's voices was heard downstairs and upstairs, there was the rattle of a sewing machine in Granny's room, they were working hard at the trousseau. Of fur coats alone, six were provided for Nadya, and the cheapest of them, in Granny's words, had cost three hundred roubles! The fuss irritated Sasha; he stayed in his own room and was cross, but everyone persuaded him to remain, and he promised not to go before the first of July.

Time passed quickly. On St. Peter's day Andrey Andreitch went with Nadya after dinner to Moscow Street to look once more at the house which had been taken and made ready for the young couple some time before. It was a house of two storeys, but so far only the upper floor had been furnished. There was in the hall a shining floor painted and parqueted, there were Viennese chairs, a piano, a violin stand; there was a smell of paint. On the wall hung a big oil painting in a gold frame—a naked lady and beside her a purple vase with a broken handle.

"An exquisite picture," said Andrey Andreitch, and he gave a respectful sigh. "It's the work of the artist Shismatchevsky."

Then there was the drawing-room with the round table, and a sofa and easy chairs upholstered in bright blue. Above the sofa was a big photograph of Father Andrey wearing a priest's velvet cap and decorations. Then they went into the dining-room in which there was a sideboard; then into the bedroom; here in the half dusk stood two bedsteads side by side, and it looked as though the bedroom had been decorated with the idea that it would always be very agreeable there and could not possibly be anything else. Andrey Andreitch led Nadya about the rooms, all the while keeping his arm round her waist; and she felt weak and conscience-stricken. She hated all the rooms, the beds, the easy chairs; she was nauseated by the naked lady. It was clear to her now that she had ceased to love Andrey Andreitch or perhaps had never loved him at all; but how to say this

and to whom to say it and with what object she did not understand, and could not understand, though she was thinking about it all day and all night. . . . He held her round the waist, talked so affectionately, so modestly, was so happy, walking about this house of his; while she saw nothing in it all but vulgarity, stupid, naïve, unbearable vulgarity, and his arm round her waist felt as hard and cold as an iron hoop. And every minute she was on the point of running away, bursting into sobs, throwing herself out of a window. Andrey Andreitch led her into the bathroom and here he touched a tap fixed in the wall and at once water flowed.

"What do you say to that?" he said, and laughed. "I had a tank holding two hundred gallons put in the loft, and so now we shall have water."

They walked across the yard and went out into the street and took a cab. Thick clouds of dust were blowing, and it seemed as though it were just going to rain.

"You are not cold?" said Andrey Andreitch, screwing up his eyes at the dust.

She did not answer.

"Yesterday, you remember, Sasha blamed me for doing nothing," he said, after a brief silence. "Well, he is right, absolutely right! I do nothing and can do nothing. My precious, why is it? Why is it that the very thought that I may some day fix a cockade on my cap and go into the government service is so hateful to me? Why do I feel so uncomfortable when I see a lawyer or a Latin master or a member of the Zemstvo? O Mother Russia! O Mother Russia! What a burden of idle and useless people you still carry! How many like me are upon you, long-suffering Mother!"

And from the fact that he did nothing he drew generalizations, seeing in it a sign of the times.

"When we are married let us go together into the country, my precious; there we will work! We will buy ourselves a little piece of land with a garden and a river, we will labour and watch life. Oh, how splendid that will be!"

He took off his hat, and his hair floated in the wind, while she listened to him and thought: "Good God, I wish I were home!"

When they were quite near the house they overtook Father Andrey.

"Ah, here's father coming," cried Andrey Andreitch, delighted, and he waved his hat. "I love my dad really," he said as he paid the cabman. "He's a splendid old fellow, a dear old fellow."

Nadya went into the house, feeling cross and unwell, thinking that there would be visitors all the evening, that she would have to entertain them, to smile, to listen to the fiddle, to listen to all sorts of nonsense, and to talk of nothing but the wedding.

Granny, dignified, gorgeous in her silk dress, and haughty as she always seemed before visitors, was sitting before the samovar. Father Andrey came in with his sly smile.

"I have the pleasure and blessed consolation of seeing you in health," he said to Granny, and it was hard to tell whether he was joking or speaking seriously.

## IV

The wind was beating on the window and on the roof; there was a whistling sound, and in the stove the house spirit was plaintively and sullenly droning his song. It was past midnight; everyone in the house had gone to bed, but no one was asleep, and it seemed all the while to Nadya as though they were playing the fiddle below. There was a sharp bang; a shutter must have been torn off. A minute later Nina Ivanovna came in in her nightgown, with a candle.

“What was the bang, Nadya?” she asked.

Her mother, with her hair in a single plait and a timid smile on her face, looked older, plainer, smaller on that stormy night. Nadya remembered that quite a little time ago she had thought her mother an exceptional woman and had listened with pride to the things she said; and now she could not remember those things, everything that came into her mind was so feeble and useless.

In the stove was the sound of several bass voices in chorus, and she even heard “O-o-o my G-o-od!” Nadya sat on her bed, and suddenly she clutched at her hair and burst into sobs.

“Mother, mother, my own,” she said. “If only you knew what is happening to me! I beg you, I beseech you, let me go away! I beseech you!”

“Where?” asked Nina Ivanovna, not understanding, and she sat down on the bedstead. “Go where?”

For a long while Nadya cried and could not utter a word.

“Let me go away from the town,” she said at last. “There must not and will not be a wedding, understand that! I don’t love that man . . . I can’t even speak about him.”

“No, my own, no!” Nina Ivanovna said quickly, terribly alarmed. “Calm yourself—it’s just because you are in low spirits. It will pass, it often happens. Most likely you have had a tiff with Andrey; but lovers’ quarrels always end in kisses!”

“Oh, go away, mother, oh, go away,” sobbed Nadya.

“Yes,” said Nina Ivanovna after a pause, “it’s not long since you were a baby, a little girl, and now you are engaged to be married. In nature there is a continual transmutation of substances. Before you know where you are you will be a mother yourself and an old woman, and will have as rebellious a daughter as I have.”

“My darling, my sweet, you are clever you know, you are unhappy,” said Nadya. “You are very unhappy; why do you say such very dull, commonplace things? For God’s sake, why?”

Nina Ivanovna tried to say something, but could not utter a word; she gave a sob and went away to her own room. The bass voices began droning in the stove again, and Nadya felt suddenly frightened. She jumped out of bed and went quickly to her mother. Nina Ivanovna, with tear-stained face, was lying in bed wrapped in a pale blue quilt and holding a book in her hands.

“Mother, listen to me!” said Nadya. “I implore you, do understand! If you would only understand how petty and degrading our life is. My eyes have been opened, and I see it all now. And what is your Andrey Andreitch? Why, he is not intelligent, mother! Merciful heavens, do understand, mother, he is stupid!”

Nina Ivanovna abruptly sat up.

“You and your grandmother torment me,” she said with a sob. “I want to live! to live,” she repeated, and twice she beat her little fist upon her bosom. “Let me be free! I am still young, I want to live, and you have made me an old woman between you!”

She broke into bitter tears, lay down and curled up under the quilt, and looked so small, so pitiful, so foolish. Nadya went to her room, dressed, and sitting at the window fell to waiting for the morning. She sat all night thinking, while someone seemed to be tapping on the shutters and whistling in the yard.

In the morning Granny complained that the wind had blown down all the apples in the garden, and broken down an old plum tree. It was grey, murky, cheerless, dark enough for candles; everyone complained of the cold, and the rain lashed on the windows. After tea Nadya went into Sasha’s room and without saying a word knelt down before an armchair in the corner and hid her face in her hands.

"What is it?" asked Sasha.

"I can't . . ." she said. "How I could go on living here before, I can't understand, I can't conceive! I despise the man I am engaged to, I despise myself, I despise all this idle, senseless existence."

"Well, well," said Sasha, not yet grasping what was meant. "That's all right . . . that's good."

"I am sick of this life," Nadya went on. "I can't endure another day here. To-morrow I am going away. Take me with you for God's sake!"

For a minute Sasha looked at her in astonishment; at last he understood and was delighted as a child. He waved his arms and began pattering with his slippers as though he were dancing with delight.

"Splendid," he said, rubbing his hands. "My goodness, how fine that is!"

And she stared at him without blinking, with adoring eyes, as though spellbound, expecting every minute that he would say something important, something infinitely significant; he had told her nothing yet, but already it seemed to her that something new and great was opening before her which she had not known till then, and already she gazed at him full of expectation, ready to face anything, even death.

"I am going to-morrow," he said after a moment's thought. "You come to the station to see me off. . . . I'll take your things in my portmanteau, and I'll get your ticket, and when the third bell rings you get into the carriage, and we'll go off. You'll see me as far as Moscow and then go on to Petersburg alone. Have you a passport?"

"Yes."

"I can promise you, you won't regret it," said Sasha, with conviction. "You will go, you will study, and then go where fate takes

you. When you turn your life upside down everything will be changed. The great thing is to turn your life upside down, and all the rest is unimportant. And so we will set off to-morrow?”

“Oh yes, for God’s sake!”

It seemed to Nadya that she was very much excited, that her heart was heavier than ever before, that she would spend all the time till she went away in misery and agonizing thought; but she had hardly gone upstairs and lain down on her bed when she fell asleep at once, with traces of tears and a smile on her face, and slept soundly till evening.

## V

A cab had been sent for. Nadya in her hat and overcoat went upstairs to take one more look at her mother, at all her belongings. She stood in her own room beside her still warm bed, looked about her, then went slowly in to her mother. Nina Ivanovna was asleep; it was quite still in her room. Nadya kissed her mother, smoothed her hair, stood still for a couple of minutes . . . then walked slowly downstairs.

It was raining heavily. The cabman with the hood pulled down was standing at the entrance, drenched with rain.

“There is not room for you, Nadya,” said Granny, as the servants began putting in the luggage. “What an idea to see him off in such weather! You had better stop at home. Goodness, how it rains!”

Nadya tried to say something, but could not. Then Sasha helped Nadya in and covered her feet with a rug. Then he sat down beside her.

“Good luck to you! God bless you!” Granny cried from the steps. “Mind you write to us from Moscow, Sasha!”

“Right. Good-bye, Granny.”

"The Queen of Heaven keep you!"

"Oh, what weather!" said Sasha.

It was only now that Nadya began to cry. Now it was clear to her that she certainly was going, which she had not really believed when she was saying good-bye to Granny, and when she was looking at her mother. Good-bye, town! And she suddenly thought of it all: Andrey, and his father and the new house and the naked lady with the vase; and it all no longer frightened her, nor weighed upon her, but was naïve and trivial and continually retreated further away. And when they got into the railway carriage and the train began to move, all that past which had been so big and serious shrank up into something tiny, and a vast wide future which till then had scarcely been noticed began unfolding before her. The rain pattered on the carriage windows, nothing could be seen but the green fields, telegraph posts with birds sitting on the wires flitted by, and joy made her hold her breath; she thought that she was going to freedom, going to study, and this was just like what used, ages ago, to be called going off to be a free Cossack.

She laughed and cried and prayed all at once.

"It's a-all right," said Sasha, smiling. "It's a-all right."

## VI

Autumn had passed and winter, too, had gone. Nadya had begun to be very homesick and thought every day of her mother and her grandmother; she thought of Sasha too. The letters that came from home were kind and gentle, and it seemed as though everything by now were forgiven and forgotten. In May after the examinations she set off for home in good health and high spirits, and stopped on the way at Moscow to see Sasha. He was just the same as the year before, with the same beard and unkempt hair, with the same large beautiful eyes, and he still wore the same coat and canvas trousers; but he looked unwell and worried, he seemed both older and

thinner, and kept coughing, and for some reason he struck Nadya as grey and provincial.

"My God, Nadya has come!" he said, and laughed gaily. "My darling girl!"

They sat in the printing room, which was full of tobacco smoke, and smelt strongly, stiflingly of Indian ink and paint; then they went to his room, which also smelt of tobacco and was full of the traces of spitting; near a cold samovar stood a broken plate with dark paper on it, and there were masses of dead flies on the table and on the floor. And everything showed that Sasha ordered his personal life in a slovenly way and lived anyhow, with utter contempt for comfort, and if anyone began talking to him of his personal happiness, of his personal life, of affection for him, he would not have understood and would have only laughed.

"It is all right, everything has gone well," said Nadya hurriedly. "Mother came to see me in Petersburg in the autumn; she said that Granny is not angry, and only keeps going into my room and making the sign of the cross over the walls."

Sasha looked cheerful, but he kept coughing, and talked in a cracked voice, and Nadya kept looking at him, unable to decide whether he really were seriously ill or whether it were only her fancy.

"Dear Sasha," she said, "you are ill."

"No, it's nothing, I am ill, but not very . . ."

"Oh, dear!" cried Nadya, in agitation. "Why don't you go to a doctor? Why don't you take care of your health? My dear, darling Sasha," she said, and tears gushed from her eyes and for some reason there rose before her imagination Andrey Andreitch and the naked lady with the vase, and all her past which seemed now as far away as her childhood; and she began crying because Sasha no longer seemed to her so novel, so cultured, and so interesting as the

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